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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. FLEISCHMANN).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

May 2, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CHARLES J. FLEISCHMANN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

U.S. NEEDS A NEW POLICY ON TIBET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, in 2002, Congress passed the Tibetan Policy Act to support the aspirations of the Tibetan people to safeguard their distinct identity. The law laid out steps to protect the distinct religious, cultural, and linguistic identity of Tibet and to press for improved respect for the human rights of the Tibetan people—a dialogue between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Chinese Government, the immediate and unconditional release of Tibetan prisoners of conscience, establishing a U.S. consular office in Lhasa, and requesting that the 11th Panchen Lama be allowed to pursue his religious studies without Chinese Government interference.

Mr. Speaker, these were basic, commonsense steps, yet 15 years later there is little progress. The Chinese-Tibet dialogue has been suspended since 2010.

There are hundreds of Tibetan prisoners of conscience. Many are monks. Some like Tenzin Delek Rinpoche have died in custody.

There is still no U.S. consular office in Lhasa, a major problem for U.S. officials trying to respond to emergencies like the 2015 earthquake that trapped dozens of our citizens in the Tibetan Autonomous Region. And the Chinese Government, officially atheist, has declared that it will decide who will be reincarnated as the next Dalai Lama.

Mr. Speaker, I want to express my concern for the well-being of the missing 11th Panchen Lama, the second highest leader in the Tibetan religion. Twenty-two years ago, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima was detained by Chinese authorities when he was just 6 years old and just 3 days after the Dalai Lama declared him to be the reincarnated Panchen Lama. Today, he is one of the world's longest serving political prisoners. China has refused to provide any details of his whereabouts.

Let me be clear. The Chinese Government does not have the right or the authority to name the reincarnated religious leaders of Tibet, not the Panchen Lama and not the next Dalai Lama.

Mr. Speaker, I constantly receive reports from Tibet of human rights abuses and affronts to basic human dignity, like the demolition of buildings and forced eviction of religious people from the famous Buddhist Institute of

Larung Gar or the restrictions that keep Tibetans from traveling around their own country, much less abroad.

We need to rethink U.S. policy toward Tibet. For years, China has faced no consequences for its failure to respect the fundamental rights of the Tibetan people. This must change.

Along with a bipartisan group of Members of Congress, I have introduced H.R. 1872, the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act. This bill imposes consequences for just one aspect of China's bad behavior: its restrictions on travel to areas in China where ethnic Tibetans live.

U.S. diplomats, journalists, and tourists have to get a special permit to enter the Tibet Autonomous Region, and travel to other Tibetan areas is also tightly controlled. But under H.R. 1872, no senior leader responsible for designing or implementing travel restrictions to Tibetan areas would be eligible to enter the United States.

The rationale for the bill is simple. The basis of diplomatic law is mutual access and reciprocity. But while the Chinese enjoy broad access to the United States, the same is not true for U.S. diplomats, journalists, or tourists going to Tibet, including Tibetan Americans trying to visit their place of origin. This is simply unacceptable. If China wants its citizens and officials to travel freely in the U.S., Americans must be able to travel freely in China, including Tibet.

Allowing travel to Tibet is only one step China needs to take. It must also remove the obstacles to freedom of movement for Tibetans within China and abroad. China can't have it both ways. Either Tibetans are Chinese citizens or they are not. If they are, they must enjoy the same rights and privileges as other Chinese citizens.

China also must permit His Holiness the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet for a visit if he so desires. He is a man of peace who will soon turn 82 years old.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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He should be able to visit his homeland.

China also should demonstrate true respect for the human rights and religious freedom of the Tibetan people. A first step would be to permit an independent international investigation into the July 2015 death, in custody, of revered lama Tenzin Delek Rinpoche.

On our side, the new Trump administration needs to appoint the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues as quickly as possible. To make progress, we need someone in charge. They must insist that China restart the dialogue to lead a negotiated agreement in Tibet.

They should develop a list of Chinese officials subject to sanction under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act. No one responsible for torture and extrajudicial killings or for significant corruption should benefit from coming to our country and doing business here.

They should publicly engage the Dalai Lama and the democratically elected leader of the Tibetan people. The State Department should take every opportunity to benefit from the Dalai Lama's knowledge and decades of reflections.

The Secretary of State should highlight the democratic practices of the Tibetan people and meet personally with the Sikyong, Dr. Lobsang Sangay, and the administration should also engage other governments to create a group of friends of Tibet. It is time to pursue a coordinated international action in support of the Tibetan people.

Mr. Speaker, time may be running out for the Tibetan people. All those who say they believe in the rights of Tibetans must move beyond words to concrete actions.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor H.R. 1872, the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act, and to support additional measures to protect all that is unique about Tibet and its people.

SUPPORTING TIBET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about something that I hold near and dear to my heart: the plight of the people of Tibet and of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The forced exile of His Holiness is a source of profound sorrow for the people of Tibet. For over 60 years, the Communist regime in Beijing has refused to allow this kind, compassionate man to come home, while systematically persecuting the Tibetan people, denying them even the most basic human rights and freedom, and implementing policies designed to wipe out the culture of Tibet.

In 2007, I authored legislation that paved the way for Congress to award the Congressional Medal of Honor to the Dalai Lama. A decade later, I am

concerned that issues in Tibet are being pushed to the sidelines, a mistake that could have profound consequences not only for Tibet, but for the entire Asian Continent.

Known as the "Roof of the World," the Tibetan plateau is the source of many of Asia's major rivers, making the Chinese regime's threat to Tibet's stability a strategically important security issue for the entire region.

Last month, I was proud to join Congressman MCGOVERN in sending a letter in support of the appointment of a Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues at the State Department. I am also proud to cosponsor Mr. MCGOVERN's bill, the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act, which is designed to help stop China's destabilizing behavior in Tibet by revoking the visa of any Chinese official found to be responsible for restricting the access of U.S. citizens to Tibet.

Last week, I had the pleasure of meeting with Richard Gere, an activist who helps to bring more attention and awareness to this very important matter. As His Holiness has said: "In the practice of tolerance, one's enemy is the best teacher."

It is essential, Mr. Speaker, that we in Congress advocate on behalf of the people of Tibet and join forces to combat the Chinese regime's increasing aggression.

ISRAEL'S 69TH INDEPENDENCE DAY

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, today marks the democratic Jewish State of Israel's 69th Independence Day.

For the Jewish people to have not only survived the Holocaust and the Nazi effort to eradicate them from the planet and then to establish a state of their own in their historical and biblical homeland is nothing short of a miracle. And in just seven decades, not only has Israel arisen, it has thrived, becoming one of the world's great democracies and the epicenter of high tech all over the world.

I am frequently asked: Why Israel? Why do I so strongly support Israel and the U.S.-Israel alliance? It is because, in Israel, I see a nation and a people who share the same ideals and the same values that we in America have: two societies committed to freedom, committed to democracy, and that understand the need to protect those ideals. Simply put, Mr. Speaker, defending Israel's right to exist is defending the values that we cherish so greatly and our way of life that we hold dear.

So to Prime Minister Netanyahu and to the people of Israel, I wish you all the very best on all that you have accomplished and achieved, and may the Jewish state be blessed with peace and security for many years to come.

I also want to extend a heartfelt thank-you to the Falic family—Simon, Jana, and Tila Falic—for their kind invitation to celebrate this momentous occasion in south Florida. I know how deeply the Falics care for the U.S.-

Israel alliance and just how much they have done for that partnership as well as for south Florida's Jewish community, so I am sure that those events were great. Thank you to the Falic family.

I wish all who celebrated this morning at the Hebrew Academy in Miami Beach, located in my congressional district, a very happy new year. I know that last night's ceremony to commemorate Israel's Memorial Day meant so much to the community. How special is it, Mr. Speaker, that Israel commemorates their fallen the night before they celebrate what their fallen helped to establish and to protect?

I hope that all of my colleagues will join me in sending our friends in Israel warm wishes today.

Mazel tov.

CONGRESS' COMMITMENT TO GOVERN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday evening I began my remarks by saying, "Say it is not so"; and I rise again this morning, as we begin our journey on ensuring that the government does not shut down and again rebutting TrumpCare that is so devastating, to say, "Say it is not so."

This morning we rose to headlines of the President of the United States saying that the government needs a shutdown in September. I am glad Democrats recognize that we do not represent just Democrats. We represent the entire Nation, and we owe them a commitment to govern, and that is what we will do.

We now will face another attempt to repeal the Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare. I am glad that Democrats have come together around common sense and the responsibility of serving not only the healthy, but the sick.

Last evening, in a very emotional testimony, one of our late-night hosts who entertains America every night, gave an emotional statement about his infant son who was receiving heart surgery. In his tears, his excitement for the success, but also his pain that people who did not have money, as we debate this frivolous healthcare bill, will be subject to the dangers and the devastation and the potential death of a child they love.

Say it is not so.

And I remember when we started the Affordable Care Act, as a member of the Judiciary Committee—all committees were involved in this process. I remember us holding Democratic hearings to listen to families who were suffering and were the brunt of not having health insurance:

The father who had a medical student son who was interning in Atlanta who had to drive with great fury to pick him up to be able to take him back to Washington, D.C., when he had an immediate attack of an appendix,